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16 November 1976

Politics in the South

1. The South Korean View of the Pak Government

While many, even among his supporters, feel that Pak's authoritarian government is too rigid, the government rests on a good deal more than pervasive controls and support by the military.

- Because fear of the North is still very strong, there is a widely shared belief that stability and order come first.
- The expanding economy has provided increasing benefits for most of the population. (See Graphics)
- The military, the bureaucracy, and the major business elements are generally satisfied that Pak's leadership has served ROK interests as well as their own.

2. Pak's Political Opposition

The general view among the elite remains that South Korea cannot afford the disorder, paralysis, and inefficiency they associate with political party rule.

The opposition is weak and divided

- The political opposition centered in the New Democratic Party is fractious [redacted] Pak 25X6 and the KCIA are adept at manipulating these weaknesses.

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- The students, the ground troops of the opposition, are easily intimidated and their ranks require renewal every graduation day.
- The most principled and serious opposition comes from the Christians. Although a distinct minority (some 13% of the population), they are influential because of their important role in the pre-war independence movement and because of the number and quality of their educational institutions. But nevertheless they are a minority, and, for the most a very cautious one. Many of their leaders believe strongly that the church should stay out of politics.
- The recent trial of clergymen and others who have urged the restoration of democracy has attracted a good deal of attention in the United States. But it has failed to spark wider anti-government activity in Seoul.

3. Current Blue House Perspectives

The political theme dominating Seoul today is one of concern over the US-ROK relations.

- This is a shift from an earlier, more optimistic mood that had pervaded the ROK government. Causes for greater confidence were:

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- Economic boom in the South; real growth rate of about 15%.
- US show of strength in responding to Panmunjom incident of August.
- North Korea's international setbacks; defaults on foreign debt; withdrawal of UNGA resolution, Scandinavian smuggling scandals.
- A domestic political opposition that is cowed by the government and enjoying little support from the public.

-- This bright picture now clouded by

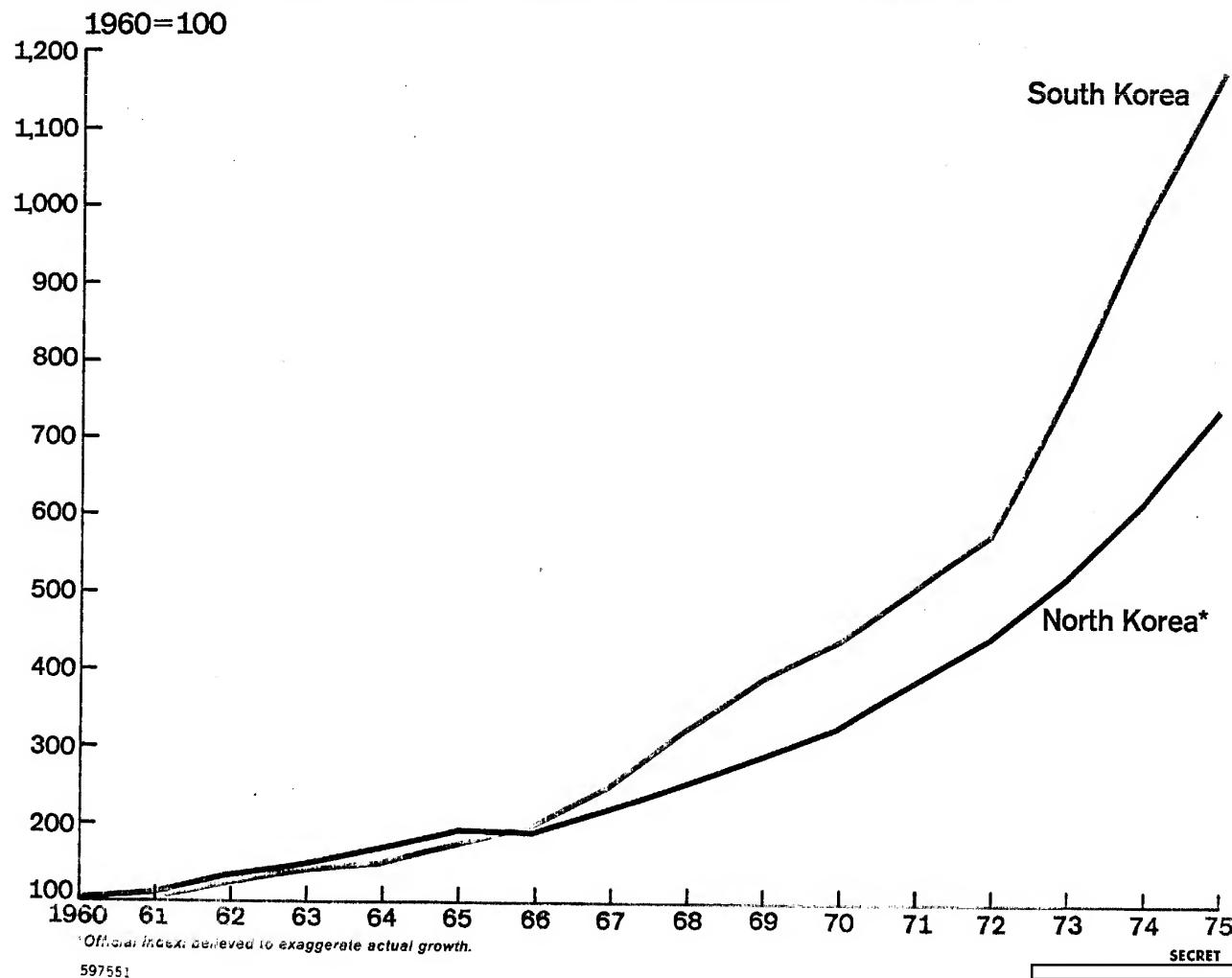
- Reports of improper Korean activities in the US.
- Uncertainties over the expected policies of the new US administration.

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North and South Korea: Index of Industrial Production



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25X1

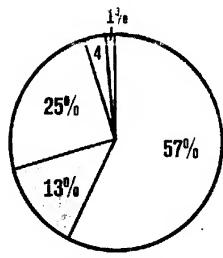
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North and South Korea: Foreign Trade, 1975

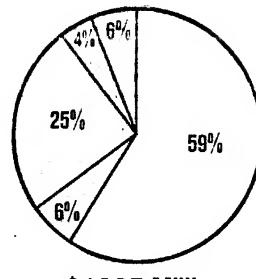
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Exports



Imports



North Korea

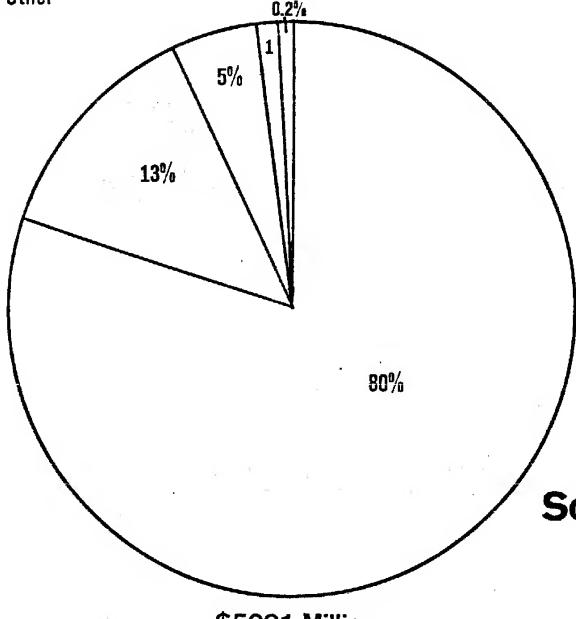
Manufactures

Foodstuffs

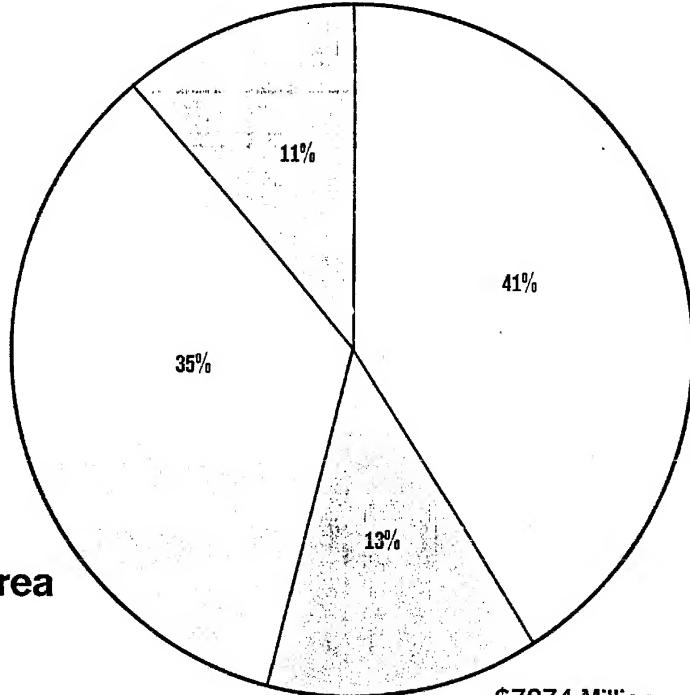
Crude Material, Fuel,
& Edible Oils

Chemicals

Other



South Korea



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